Moving Unseen: Knowledge Gaps and Next Steps for Improving Climate-Related Child Mobility Data Take-Aways and Recommendations from an IDAC-UNICEF Workshop

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I. Introduction

Today, children are growing up in a world where climate change is exacerbating the frequency and intensity of both slow and sudden onset disasters. As events like drought, severe storms, floods and wildfire become more common, new complications, challenges, and often rights violations arise in children's lives.

Meanwhile, more children are on the move than at any other point in recorded history: there are an estimated 35.5 million international migrant children worldwide, many of whom are in need of international protection.[1] A UNICEF report found that between 2016 and 2021, there were 43.1 million new internal displacements of children linked to weather events.[2] These children are of great concern as they are among the world's most marginalized, yet from a statistical perspective are often invisible. This gap in evidence contributes in turn to their being overlooked by decision makers, meaning many do not receive the assistance and protection they deserve. This begs the questions of how data and statistics can illuminate the situation of children engaged in both internal and cross-border climate mobility and can play a role in rights-based solutions for these children. This is particularly important as climate projections point towards more frequent and severe climate shocks, illustrating a critical need for future-oriented planning and programming informed by robust data and statistics.

Overview of workshop

On 28 and 29 November 2023 the International Data Alliance for Children on the Move (IDAC), in partnership with UNICEF Innocenti – Global Office of Research and Foresight (Innocenti) and UNICEF Division of Data, Analytics, Planning and Monitoring (DAPM) facilitated a global discussion around the theme of improving data on climate-related child and family mobility. A hybrid, participatory workshop in Geneva, Switzerland, was convened with a core group of cross-sectoral data and thematic experts working on issues relevant to mobility, climate, and child rights, protection and well-being. Participants included migration and displacement focal points from IDAC members, relevant UN agencies, associated academic and research partners, thought leaders working at the intersection of migration and displacement and children, and youth and child representatives.

The workshop aimed to take stock of, and improve, data for informing solutions to the needs of children and their families engaged in contexts of climate-related migration and displacement. It also sought to establish a shared research agenda through identifying common gaps, priorities, and opportunities for knowledge-sharing and collaboration. Discussions were held across a variety of issue areas aggregated in the following objectives:

[1] IDAC (2024) 9 Facts About Children on the Move. New York: IDAC, UNICEF. Available at: https://data.unicef.org/resources/9-facts-about-children-on-the-move/

[2] UNICEF (2023) Children Displaced in a Changing Climate. New York: UNICEF. Available at: https://www.unicef.org/media/145951/file/Climate%20displacement%20report%20(English).pdf

i. Landscaping available large-scale data on trends and patterns in climate-related child mobility, and relevant resources and platforms;
ii. Collaboratively mapping data gaps, data needs and priorities and developing a shared research agenda;
iii. Knowledge-sharing of relevant data products and data-driven research;
iv. Identifying good practices that can be replicated in other contexts;
v. Identifying areas for potential collaboration and partnership between institutions on joint data agendas related to climate-related child mobility;

About the Organizers

IDAC is a cross-sectoral global coalition comprised of governments (including experts from national statistical offices and migration-relevant line ministries), international and regional organizations, NGOs, think tanks, academics, and civil society. The main objective of IDAC is to improve data and statistics on migrant and forcibly displaced children with the goal of supporting evidence-based policymaking that protects and empowers them.

UNICEF Innocenti – Global Office of Research and Foresight has as its core mandate the generation of cutting-edge, policy-relevant research that equips the organization and the wider global community to deliver results for children and their families. Innocenti's current portfolio of work on child and family migration and displacement focuses on the generation, communication, and uptake of evidence across a wide range of migration and forced displacement topics, including climate-related migration and displacement, inclusion and service access, the role that age and gender plays in refugees' and migrants' journeys, and rethinking migration from children's perspective.

UNICEF DAPM is responsible for driving, shaping and guiding UNICEF's evidence-informed analysis, strategic planning, monitoring and reporting. DAPM is leading the data and evidence work in various areas including migration, displacement and climate. Its recent work involves identifying hotspots of weather-related displacement of children. DAPM also leads the IDAC from UNICEF side.

Report roadmap

This report provides a synthesis of workshop discussions, follow-up consultations, and desk-based research on the topic of climate-related child mobility data. It shares key take-aways and recommendations arising out of the workshop along with summaries of relevant workshop discussions. It is intended to stand as a record of the workshop while also providing salient information to decision makers and researchers working on child mobility, climate-related migration and displacement, and/or data related to child migrants and displaced children. The following sections present key take-aways from workshop discussions followed by recommendations and a brief conclusion.

II. Key Take-Aways

Definitional, practical, and temporal challenges impede efforts to improve climate-related child mobility data and data coordination

Participants agreed that data on children and young people engaged in climate mobility is sparse, inconsistent, and fragmented, reflecting in turn wider long-standing gaps in child migration and displacement data and data coordination. In addition to limited foundational data on the scale, drivers, and dynamics of climate-related migration and displacement in general, children impacted by climate mobility remain largely invisible in sector-specific data and evidence related to climate change, migration and displacement. There is a need to increase the generation of research that is inclusive of children's voices to identify new, experientially- and theory-informed questions that can be 'asked' of data.

Data regularly collected on food insecurity and internal displacement, for instance, are rarely disaggregated by age, despite the heightened risk that children face to malnutrition.[3] While close to half the world's refugee children are out of school, data is not regularly collected on the number of children out of school in the context of displacement due to disasters.[4] A comprehensive review of the literature reveals similar gaps in child-specific data and evidence in the contexts of climate mobility and health, poverty, child protection, and WASH.[5]

It is also important to note that data needs don't just centre on addressing a *lack* of data, but at times an overabundance of data that is not being used, is not interoperable, and may even be duplicative. Some accounts of 'drowning' in data emphasised the existence of under-leveraged, disconnected data from overlapping and siloed sectors (disaster risk reduction –DRR, humanitarianism, development, and others).

Participants raised and discussed specific challenges related to coordination, classification, demography, geography, and time (of research and length of migration/displacement), data granularity, and appropriate age-, mobility- and climate-sensitive methodologies. Each problem area is briefly discussed in more depth below.

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[3] IDMC (2023) GRID 2023: Internal Displacement and Food Security. Geneva: IDMC. Available at: https://api.internal-displacement.org/sites/default/files/publications/documents/IDMC_GRID_2023_Global_Report_on_Internal_Displacement_LR.pdf

[4] UNHCR (2023) Education Report 2022 – All Inclusive: The Campaign for Refugee Education. Geneva: UNHCR. Available at: https://www.unhcr.org/media/unhcr-education-report-2022-all-inclusive-campaign-refugee-education

[5] UNICEF (2018) A call to action: Protecting children on the move starts with better data. New York: UNICEF. Available at: https://www.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl486/files/press_release/file/pbn_02152018_Call%20to%20action_clean.pdf

The challenge of data coordination

Gaps in the inclusivity of sectoral data speak to the critical need for climate-related child mobility data. However, the generation, management and coordination of such data across global, regional and country stakeholders is complicated by a variety of challenges. Political will is a key and underlying one. Governments need to invest systematically in foundational data capacity-strengthening *and* prepare for a future affected by climate change. This remains a big challenge for many countries despite increased advocacy at regional and global levels, such as at COP, and through the Global Compact on Migration, Global Compact on Refugees, the Secretary-General's Agenda on Internal Displacement, and other fora and agendas. It was noted that government buy-in is needed to effectively address many of the other challenges and barriers impeding inclusive data. Efforts must be led by governments, but must also include international and non-governmental organisations, private sector actors, civil society actors, and research and academic communities.

The challenge of classification: Forced or voluntary movement?

Mobility decisions related to climate change and migration are complex and often do not fit neatly into the 'voluntary' or 'forced' migration classifications. Mobility decisions related to climate change are often strongly linked with other drivers of movement, such as education, job opportunities or better access to services. Participants emphasised that the complexity of interlinked drivers posed significant challenges for data collection. As migration data are often collected based on one primary driver of migration, the interdependent nature of climate change can make it difficult to identify those children who have migrated or been displaced primarily because of climate change. Migration caused by slow-onset disasters such as extended and repeated droughts which create economic and social crises is difficult to quantify in the first place due to its overlap with other forms of migration (e.g. economic migration). In contexts where extreme weather events collide with rapid urbanization, fragility and conflict, children engaged in migration are even more likely to slip through the cracks unnoticed.

Outtake Box: The Mixed Migration Centre's (MMC) Research on Climate Mobility

The Mixed Migration Centre (MMC) is a global network engaged in data collection, research, analysis, and policy and programmatic development on mixed migration. It aims to increase understanding of mixed migration, to positively impact global and regional migration policies, to inform evidence-based mixed migration responses for people on the move, and to stimulate forward thinking in public and policy debates on mixed migration. An increasing part of its portfolio focuses on climate mobility, notably through a series of case studies in Africa and the Middle East and knowledge papers.

Through the 4Mi project, which is MMC's flagship primary data collection system, MMC has been collecting data among refugees and migrants since 2014, including on the environmental drivers of mixed migration. Over 100,000 individuals surveys have been collected which present a nuanced picture of how the impacts of climate change interact with mobility, as presented in MMC's report on the topic in West and North Africa. MMC's growing body of data on the role of climate-related events

and environmental stressors in driving migration reinforces the value of viewing climate mobility through a mixed migration lens to account for the many drivers, factors, and contexts that influence migration.

Adapted from: Mixed Migration Centre (MMC) (2022) Climate change, environmental stressors, and mixed migration. Available at: https://mixedmigration.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/254_Climate-Change_Key-Messages.pdf

The challenge of inclusive data

One of the clearest trends that arose in workshop discussions was of data gaps at the exclusion of particular parts of the world or certain populations. Challenges in obtaining inclusive data are in part systemic, with some countries lacking the capacity for comprehensive population profiling that leaves not only migrants and displaced people out of data but other citizens, as well. At the same time, these gaps are to some extent also based on priorities of research institutions or other non-state actors driving evidence generation, suggesting an ongoing need for critical introspection to address biases and widen scopes wherever possible. The need to focus on inclusive data also highlights the importance of involving affected communities, and notably children when appropriate, in participatory data collection and analysis, and ground truthing processes.

The challenge of geography: Data gaps in low- and middle-income countries

A key data gap noted by workshop participants is the relatively limited data available from low and middle-income countries (LMICs). Many of these data gaps also exist in countries and regions where climate disasters are predicted to hit hardest, further compounding the challenge. Sub-saharan Africa and small island developing states (SIDS) were noted as key regions where further evidence generation is crucially needed. One participant asserted that this limited data landscape means that models predicting child climate-related mobility (and other types of mobility) are inherently biased towards data primarily provided from high-income, Northern countries contexts.

In turn, global and regional gaps in available climate-related migration and displacement data, as well as poor data coordination, hamper efforts to identify children most at risk, prepare for and respond effectively, including work to strengthen the services that build children's resilience to migration and displacement.

Outtake Box: The University of Virginia's Humanitarian Collaborative: Exploring Climate Mobility to the United States' Southern Border

The Humanitarian Collaborative at the University of Virginia (UVA) explores how both conflict and climate factors impact migration to the United States. A key project undertaken in collaboration with scholars from UVA and Duke University examines the factors driving the exponential growth in

apprehensions of family units from the Northern Triangle arriving at the U.S. southern border between 2012 and 2019. While it is possible that Biden administration policies and COVID-19 alter the calculus of migrants, they did not cause the sharp increase in apprehensions in 2019. The rise also predates hurricanes Eta and Iota, although the devastating toll of these November 2020 storms is likely to push more people to leave their homes and travel north. The project's findings point to an interaction of climate factors and violence as the drivers of this outcome. The increase in migration from Honduras and Guatemala over the last several years and the growing proportion of migrants arriving as family units is driven by persistently high levels of violence coupled with sharp increases in food insecurity. These findings suggest that the current increase in arrivals at the US Southern Border is driven by similar forces, though the countries of origin have expanded.

The challenge of demography: Limited granularity and disaggregation in data

While a variety of international and government agencies collect data on migration and displacement, including some related to disaster displacement, much of this data is not disaggregated by fundamental demographic factors, especially age, sex, or gender. This lack in disaggregation contributes to rendering the situation of children, as well as particular groups of children, invisible. The importance of intersectional data came up as a key need by practitioners in the workshop, who discussed the importance of understanding particular groups' needs to inform programming. One participant discussed IDMC's case studies on drought-induced displacement to Mogadishu, Somalia,[6] which found (perhaps counter-intuitively) more children attended school post-displacement than before. When the data was analysed further, however, it became clear that this statistic was only relevant for boys and not for girls. Such examples illustrate the importance of disaggregated data.

Marginalized groups were also raised by participants as an important demographic consideration for data disaggregation. Smaller-scale studies and evidence from various displacement contexts show that marginalized groups, including girls, conflict-displaced children, children living in indigenous and pastoralist communities, and children with disabilities face heightened risks in the context of climate-related migration and displacement. Despite some knowledge on this topic, large-scale and robust data on these children in the context of climate mobility are rarely collected.

Host countries rarely include international migrants and internally displaced people (IDPs) in censuses. This is particularly evident in the case of data on internally displaced children, representative of a wider data gap on IDPs. The UN Secretary-General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement builds on the findings of the High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement and proposes several actions to tackle this gap. This includes the development of internal displacement data systems for Member States and for international actors to improve their data

[6] IDMC (2018) No matter of choice: Displacement in a changing climate. IDMC Thematic series brief. Available at: https://api.internal-displacement.org/sites/default/files/publications/documents/202003-somalia-slow-onset.pdf

coordination efforts and help strengthen State's capacities to collect and manage data.[7] These and other actions are crucially needed; given that most climate-induced displacement remains internal, the current gap precludes significant knowledge on drivers, adaptative strategies, and outcomes for children that would be of relevance to wider discussions on international climate-induced displacement.

The challenge of temporality: Longitudinal data and the timespan of mobility

Issues of time and temporality arose in different workshop sessions in relation to both data gaps and discussions on climate mobility models. There was a widespread acknowledgement among participants that data and models often take vastly different timescales into account for both climate and weather data and migration and displacement. This situation is further complicated by the reality that, for many children, migration and displacement does not just happen once, but is instead repeated or cyclical, and may at different points stem from conflict, economic need, and climate pressures or extreme weather events.

To this end, data collected at just one point of time can only provide a snapshot of what may be a much more complex story of mobility. Models employing historical climate data sources, further, differ from those based primarily on climate projections. This in turn are different from models employing data on migration and displacement, which can present a variety of different 'pictures' of migration. Models discussed at the workshop included those presenting current numbers of climate-induced migrants, others exploring historical driving factors in mobility, and still others using data projections to predict future mobility. This uneven data landscape includes limited longitudinal data on child mobility (overall and in relation to climate hazards),

One interesting question raised by a workshop participant related to the timespan of climate disasters. Participants discussed how child mobility is affected by slow- versus sudden onset disasters, positing this as a key question to inform both projected numbers as well as resulting programming. The needs of already displaced people, who may be living in protracted displacement in a host country for years or even decades, is also an important area of inquiry, illustrating how issues of temporality should be considered in data in a range of areas.

In addition to children not receiving the assistance they deserve, these gaps also impede efforts to *predict* the extent of climate risks children on the move face and how they may be affected by climate hazards in the future. It is difficult to estimate with great certainty how many children will leave home, whether forcibly or not, due to climate-related events. It is also important to ascertain the extent to which children will remain *immobile* in future – as may be the case for many children from the poorest countries or poorest households without the resources to leave home when disaster strikes.

[7] UN (2022) The United Nations Secretary-General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement: Follow-Up to the Report of the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement. Geneva: UN.

A variety of displacement/mobility prediction models exist or are under development by different agencies – yet few focus on children.

Multiple models were shared throughout the workshop, which exist or are being developed by various agencies. These include the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC). Models examine a range of aspects related to climate hazards, migration and displacement, and populations, including children, as presented in the outtake boxes below.

Participants reflected on their shared optimism towards these and other emerging models aimed at strengthening the analytical foundations supporting improved evidence-driven responses to climate-related mobility challenges. Enhanced and more interoperable models offer opportunities to better inform individual agency's own programming and offering projections for needs analyses to inform the nature and extent of future assistance. Improved data modelling also offers important new advocacy opportunities, particularly as the humanitarian and development community increasingly explores option for anticipatory assistance to support vulnerable populations in advance of an extreme weather event such as flood or drought.

There was broad agreement amongst participants that climate projections are known, with the work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) referenced as a key resource, and that modelling in this area can be very accurate in terms of insights at a general population level; what is less certain is how impacts will play out in specific areas and for particular populations, such as children. This is where non-traditional data approaches, ranging from youth fora to big data analysisWAS can provide important additional information to either inform or complement models. Participants from the Migration Youth and Children Platform Committee on Data (MYCP) as well as a range of university participants shared complementary data approaches and important methodological insight on how to capture data on children.

Outtake Box: UNHCR's Early Warning Risk Modeling of Climate-Induced Forced Displacement

The Climate-Induced Forced Displacement Early Warning-GRID (CLIFEDEW-GRID), developed by UNHCR in collaboration with the University of California Irvine, aims to understand the connections between climate change and forced displacement. This project leverages advanced data analytics and innovative approaches to anticipate and respond effectively to the growing crisis of climate-induced displacement. By focusing on sub-national grid cells, the project will better accommodate in-country heterogeneity than traditional country-level approaches. It will be focus on countries in Western and Eastern Africa and aims to provide:

- **A Risk Monitor** with real-time insights into evolving climate-related displacement risks to better anticipate, prevent, and respond to crises;

- **A sub-national predictive model** focusing to a better understand which populations are most at risk of displacement, and foster an
- **User-centric data exploration** through an open-source web interface designed for immersive data exploration and feedback collection.

Adapted from: CRAFD (2024) UNHCR: Early Warning Risk Modeling of Climate-Induced Forced Displacement. Available at: https://crafd.io/data-financing/clifdewgrid

Outtake Box: IDMC's Disaster Risk Model

IDMC uses information about recorded and forecast hazards to model the risk of future displacement. The aim is to:

1. To prepare for, and respond to, disaster-related displacement
2. To prevent future displacement and reduce its impacts on people and communities
3. To achieve durable peace and security and strengthen global governance

IDMC calculates how many people will be forced to flee damaged or destroyed homes in a given location each year, decade or century. The model can estimate how many people will become displaced due to a specific event, like cyclone Idai which hit Mozambique in April. This information can serve two important goals: preventing future displacement and supporting life-saving early warning systems and pre-emptive evacuations. While not currently able to specifically account for internally displaced children, there is ongoing work to disaggregate data by age and other demographics as is possible, although the possibilities of this are currently limited by the lack of age-disaggregated data available.

Adapted from: IDMC (2024) Disaster Risk Model. Available at: https://www.internal-displacement.org/disaster-risk-model/

Outtake Box: IOM Global Data Institute

IOM established the Global Data Institute (GDI) to harness the power of its data for operations, making meaning of global migration patterns, and informing foresight. The GDI capitalizes on synergies between its three units – the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), the Global Migration Data Analysis Center (GMDAC), and the Data Impact and Strategy Unit – and collaborates with a network of regional data specialists to illuminate the global data story of human mobility. The GDI delivers transformative impact in support of IOM's strategic priorities by delivering data for action to save lives and drive solutions, data for insight to facilitate regular migration pathways, and data for foresight to drive preparedness and anticipatory action.

Adapted from: IOM (2024) Global Data Institute. Available at: https://www.iom.int/global-data-institute

Despite a range of models, none offer specific projections on climate-related child mobility. Instead, participants noted that once granular data on children is obtained, these models could

use these to develop projections. For example, one participant noted major steps forward in population modelling in recent years that has supported the development of models on migration and displacement. This includes a spatially explicit approach to data, which can consist of very localized grids of 10 km. A variety of information can be layered to obtain granular data, ranging from education levels to life expectancy – or data on child migrants or refugees, were it available. The need for improved data granularity continued to be an important theme throughout the workshop, as participants discussed its importance in understanding numbers of exposed populations and who lies within hazard-prone areas and their vulnerability as well as for understanding historical and projected climate trends.

Qualitative data was also identified by participants a key data source to inform modelling as well as generate more comprehensive understandings to inform policy and practice. One participant explained, 'We need the qualitative element; by all means it can help in any operational or practical way. If we go into community level data, we need to consider people's attachments to their land [alongside other pieces of information].' Another participant affirmed that qualitative research should not be considered just for 'ground-truthing' but instead perceived as a rigorous methodology with penetration that others may lack. This, in turn, draws attention to the need for better engagement with the voices, experiences, and lived perspectives of children, youth and their families in contexts of climate-induced mobility. This is needed both in qualitative data as well as surveys, and in the meaningful co-creation of evidence throughout the research design, implementation, and analysis phases.

Outtake Box: UNICEF-Innocenti's Qualitative Research with Children on the Move

Through the large-scale 'Reimagining Migration Responses' project, UNICEF-Innocenti conducted a series of qualitative and mixed methods studies in the Horn of Africa aimed at building knowledge to improve UNICEF's programmes which support children on the move. Qualitative research provided a critically needed avenue to better understand the experiences of these children. The study included 282 individual interviews and focus group discussions with children and parents on the move, including internally displaced persons, refugees, migrants and returnees. Within each group, researchers examined why children move and the problems they face when they do. The researchers also examined what structures exist to protect children and whether they are effectively reaching children on the move and responding to the threats these children face. These and other insights led to practical recommendations for strengthening child protection systems on the ground and ongoing policy engagement at national, regional, and international levels.

To learn more, see UNICEF-Innocenti (2019) Reimagining Migration Responses. Florence: UNICEF-Innocenti. Available at: https://www.unicef-irc.org/child-migration-hoa

The challenge of harmonizing multiple methodologies and data sources across agencies

The workshop discussion also focused on challenge of persistent gaps in interoperability, which risk increasing as new models emerge. Most of the models highlighted by participants employ

different methodologies and often different datasets to understand the same or different types and scales of migration and/or displacement related to climate change. For example, some explore the drivers of migration and displacement related to climate events to estimate future movement flows while others seek to estimate the number of populations already displaced. These differing objectives are by no means problematic and indeed increase opportunities for a wider understanding of drivers, current state, and projected numbers and needs of children experiencing climate mobility. However, model development can be stymied due to bottlenecks in terms of data-sharing arrangements, knowledge management architecture, and a lack of partnerships, which likely account to some extent to existing fragmentation in the landscape.

The plethora of methodologies, datasets, levels of data granularity, and timescales explored across models increases the difficulty of using these innovations to obtain a wider, more comprehensive picture of children's climate mobility across models. These disparate elements of models are also indicative of a broader culture of organizational siloes which risks both limiting intra- and inter-agency learning and increasing the likelihood of the duplication of work. These siloes exist across different communities of practice, including disaster risk management (DRM), meteorological and climate sciences, humanitarian, development, and child protection. To complicate matters further, they are also present as divisions within the migration/displacement space, with silos existing between communities focused on migration, displacement, IDPs, and other types of forcibly displaced people. This fragmented reality, which exists even within the UN, reinforces the need for data coordination and knowledge-sharing/joint action.

Scarcity of child-focused climate mobility models, due in part to limited child-friendly data sources and a lack of age-disaggregated data.

Despite this range of models, very few currently offer specific projections on climate-related child mobility. Instead, participants noted that once granular data on children is obtained, these models could use it to develop projections. For example, one participant noted major steps forward in population modelling in recent years that has supported the development of models on migration and displacement. This includes a spatially explicit approach to data, which can consist of very localized grids of 10 km. A variety of information can be layered to obtain granular data, ranging from education levels to life expectancy – or data on child migrants or refugees, were it available.

A common point made throughout workshop presentations and discussions was that many of the data sources used to understand migration and displacement trends and patterns are not adequate sources for capturing numbers or experiences of children, and that proxy data to account for this can be difficult to find. For example, sources informing some models discussed included Facebook and Twitter/X posts, Google trends, and local and national news sources. While enormously helpful to answer some questions and shed light on some areas, such datasets are likely to share little about children, in part because children contribute very little to them. Even household surveys may share little about children's needs or experiences of climate mobility unless particular attention is given, as they are often held with heads of households. The limitations of particular data sources to shed light on climate-related child mobility reinforces

the value of qualitative research, and particularly in-person primary data collection, as important to utilise as relevant.

Exemplifying existing data gaps and the value of data to inform programming, one participant shared information about discussions at the World Health Organization regarding routine immunization rates among Ukrainian refugee children after the war in Ukraine broke out. They explained that little was known about coverage rates until a large-scale survey took place, which informed the decision to conduct a mass vaccination campaign targeting Ukrainian children in Poland. Other examples of fit-for-purpose data collection were shared, but those related to climate mobility in particular were limited, further illustrating current gaps in this area.

The value of developing a community of practice and joint advocacy on increasing data on climate-related child mobility

Arising out of discussions captured above relating to limited data and modelling on climate-related child mobility, workshop participants identified a need for greater communication and cohesion across agencies to share learning, data, and best practices relating to climate mobility forecasting and monitoring. In part, this was discussed as developing greater coordination across 'levels', ranging from the development of international consortia and partnerships to increase data collection and sharing to the value of individual agencies engaging in broader data-sharing through increasing the interoperability of datasets or making more data openly available or sharable upon request. Sustainable partnerships were identified as key to creating a more inclusive and robust data ecosystem related to children's climate mobility. Suggested annual or biannual events, such as UNFCC COP, that could be used to unify voices around the need for climate-related child mobility data included UNICEF IDAC's annual conference, the Global Refugee Forum, UN Migration Network Annual Meeting, and engagement with the Multistakeholder Pledge for the Inclusion of Stateless and Forcibly Displaced Populations in National Statistical Systems and Surveys.

In part, the interest in a stronger community of practice stemmed from the importance participants placed on using data for action and impact. To this end, participants voiced a need to better understand the types of data and data communication that do inform policy, as well as to clearly understand target end-users of both collected data and information that comes from it. Discussions included an examination of what the purpose of data is from policy perspectives as compared to advocacy and operational perspectives. One participant noted the pressure to use 'headline-grabbing numbers' for advocacy, which comes with a risk that in such a 'race to the top' even numbers in the millions are not 'high' enough to sway policymakers or donors to take action. Concomitant concerns were voiced around the value that numbers were ascribed in the policy and advocacy sphere at the risk of less importance being placed on robust and reliable data and methodologies used to acquire it.

An important take-away for advocacy was that of presenting the issue of climate mobility and children as leading to both positive and negative impacts depending on the situation and level of

support and assistance that children received. In line with the most IPCC report, migration should be viewed as an important adaptation strategy and therefore a valuable choice that children and their families can make. At the same time, it is important to clearly distinguish between migration and displacement, the latter of which can be understood as forced and thus more likely to lead to negative outcomes such as loss and damage. Overall, discussions centred on the opportunities that data offers to share positive perspectives on climate-related child mobility alongside the harsh realities that also arise.

Outtake Box: UNICEF's International Data Alliance for Children on the Move (IDAC) Global Convening Power

The International Data Alliance for Children on the Move (IDAC) is a cross-sectoral global coalition that aims to improve data and statistics and support evidence-based policymaking for migrant and displaced children. IDAC recognizes that migration and displacement are dynamic issues and the work scope and tasks of the group need to be flexible and adaptable to an evolving environment. The key tasks include mapping data gaps and data needs, identifying measurement challenges, documenting good practice and providing solutions, strengthening data systems and capacities in countries and creating a space for countries, international and regional organizations, NGOs, think tanks, academics and civil society to share experiences and good practices.

IDAC has adopted a three-pronged Action Plan geared towards:

- Strengthening national data systems and capacities to protect migrant and forcibly displaced children, *thru the provision of sustainable capacity building support;*
- Promoting and establishing collaborative, innovative methods for child-specific data work *through the IDAC platform using its annual conference, annual report, and working groups;* and
- Improving data visibility, availability, accessibility and usability *by developing a global database and dashboard on children on the move, as well as a dedicated online IDAC website*.

Adapted from: UNICEF (2024) International Data Alliance for Children on the Move (IDAC). Webpage, available at: https://data.unicef.org/resources/international-data-alliance-for-children-on-the-move/

Outtake Box: UNICEF's Frontier Data Network (FDN)

UNICEF has recently launched the Frontier Data Network (FDN) – a new initiative to facilitate to ethically and responsibly leverage data science and data technologies for UNICEF and partners. To bridge the digital skills and technology gap, UNICEF is building a global community from across the private sector, academic research centers, and the front lines of the humanitarian world.

Over 300 staff and partners are already engaged in the early stages of the Frontier Data Network across over 60 countries and multiple disciplines. Participants are collaborating on dozens of projects that leverage data in new ways to drive results for children. These "big data" pilots and data analytics

projects not only improve UNICEF's ability to respond to existing crises but also help staff predict and better prepare for future impacts on vulnerable children—such as impacts from floods, droughts, or conflict.

The potential of these technologies, when integrated with existing systems, offer a new hope for dealing with some of the most critical and growing challenges affecting children from conflict to epidemics or climate change.

Adapted from: UNICEF (2024) Pushing the frontiers of data technology to drive results for children. Available at: https://data.unicef.org/data-for-action/pushing-the-frontiers-of-data-technology-to-drive-results-for-children

Outtake Box: Big Data for Migration Alliance (BD4MA)

The Big Data for Migration Alliance aims to accelerate the responsible and ethical use of non-traditional data sources and methods to support migration policy on the global, national, and local levels. The BD4M is the first-ever dedicated network of stakeholders seeking to facilitate responsible data innovation and collaboration to improve the evidence base on migration and human mobility and its use for policy making. As part of NYU GovLab's 100 Questions Initiative, the 10 Migration Questions Initiative mapped the most pressing questions on migration that could be answered if relevant datasets were generated or made available. As a means of data innovation, the 10 questions were sourced from a group of 80 "migration bilinguals" – individuals with migration and data expertise – and curated by the EC Joint Research Centre, The GovLab and IOM. The project stems from the recognition that identifying clear questions is critical to unlock effective data collaborations between the private and public sectors. BD4M will move this forward by addressing the ten top questions about migration and human mobility as defined by a global cohort of experts and validated through an open public campaign.

Adapted from BD4M (2024) About the Alliance. Available at: https://data4migration.org/

Recommendations

A variety of recommendations to improve climate-related child mobility data were identified by workshop participants. While many of these are also relevant for wider (child) migration and displacement data, these were seen as particularly important in the case of data collection and analysis on climate-related child mobility:

Data Availability and Quality

- **Increasing data granularity and coverage.** In particular, there is a clear need to increase intersectional, age and gender-disaggregated data collection to ensure that children are represented in data on climate mobility. This could take place through:

  - Higher regional coverage (SDGs, child specific and child related indicators);
  - Data disaggregation across all reporting by national statistical offices;
  - Disaggregation of the age, gender, sex, disability, and ethnicity of IDPs;
  - Increased levels of qualitative and mixed methods data collection focused on children's experiences and perceptions of climate mobility;
  - Creation of an open-access warehouse of child specific data.

- **Increasing data accuracy.** There was consensus on the need to better explain the robustness of data, such as making confidence levels public, and balancing the accuracy of data with a broad enough scope to ensure utility (i.e. breadth versus depth).

- **Increasing data interoperability and standardisation**, including through streamlined definitions and categories (as discussed above).
  - Standardising the use of baseline indicators and measures to increase data interoperability;
  - Workshop discussions also emphasised the importance of sharing confidence levels and critically evaluating both opportunities and limitations that arise through striking a balance between accuracy and scope in data coverage;
  - Participants discussed the value of knowledge exchanges between actors producing datasets on climate mobility to identify key steps to standardise and harmonise data categories and formats to facilitate better data integration across sectors and geographical regions, with the recognition that these may be data- and context-specific.

- **Building Capacity in National Data Systems and Engagement with Data Users**
  - Developing and/or enhancing national data systems and engaging with data users (including policy and program decision makers) to track and monitor the protection and development needs of children on the move, who are directly or indirectly affected by climate change.
  - Advocacy surrounding the inclusion of displaced people and other migrants in national data collection, with an emphasis on the importance of age- and gender-disaggregated data.

- **Maintaining responsible and ethical data practices.** While always important, this was considered particularly relevant due to the additional responsibility of ensuring children remained protected and are not placed at greater risk of harm due to information about them being collected.

Partnership and knowledge-sharing

- **Increasing access to models and datasets developed internally in organisations.** Increasing access was seen as crucial to avoiding duplication of work as well as increasing knowledge through a) learning from other data collection methodologies and models, b) increasing the interoperability of datasets and models, and c) gaining a more comprehensive picture of the state of climate-related child mobility data to inform both research and programming.

- **Increasing methodological transparency**. Transparency in methodologies was considered critical to both building on research and linking datasets, as well as replicating or extending studies when relevant.

- **Developing a 'data landscape' directory to increase awareness, collaborations, and partnerships related to climate-related child mobility data. This could take place through comprehensive mapping of the following:**
    - Existing datasets by humanitarian organisations on the topic of climate-related child mobility;
    - Different formats/ways that organisations publish their data to identify formats for streamlining or identify ways to increase interoperability;
    - Type of data needed to inform for policies or programmes that is not yet available to inform future research agendas;
    - Relevant networks, platforms and partnerships working at the intersection of climate change and human mobility;
    - Good practices and innovative approaches that may be replicated or scaled up.

- **Development of joint data agendas between different knowledge actors (e.g. humanitarian and development agencies, research institutions, etc.) related to climate-related child mobility**
    - Increased commitments to use existing data to guide action to the extent possible, with the recognition that large amounts of data do already exist that could more meaningfully guide policy and practice.
    - More consultations on the specific needs of different data and evidence end-users (e.g. government, civil society, communities) to understand what types of data and in which format can support the decision-making of specific stakeholders. Information stemming from consultations can increase the usability of data and evidence and in turn increase its impact.
    - Engagement in relevant fora to share current projects and models.

- **Inclusion of migrant and refugee children's perspectives through qualitative data and partnerships with youth-led refugee and migrant organisations as knowledge partners, including in data collection.**
    - Increase qualitative datasets and mixed methods research capturing children's and families' voices related to climate mobility;
    - To facilitate the above, the development or increased access to specific training programs to enhance the capabilities of data collectors and analysts in child-

centred data collection and analyses, including developing data literacy and skills in increasing data interoperability;
- Engaging youth-led refugee and migrant organisations in research design and data collection and analysis can provide grassroots insights into findings and lead to important and currently rarely available local datasets, while also supporting youth engagement and empowerment.

Conclusion

This report has shared insights, discussions, and recommendations arising out of a two-day workshop focused on the topic of climate-related child mobility data. It has highlighted a clear need to collect more and better-quality data documenting children's role in climate-related mobility relating to both short-onset disasters like floods as well as longer-onset ones like drought. In particular, there is a need for data in this area that is explicitly focused on children as well as more datasets with the possibility for age and other demographic disaggregation. While enough evidence exists to know that climate change impacts child mobility, there is not yet enough knowledge on how to adequately predict and respond to the needs and numbers of children engaging in climate mobility.

The positive impacts that increasing the quality and quantity of data in this area holds, including through the development of a community of practice and broader sharing to strengthen the data ecosystem on climate-related child mobility data, are myriad. With more data, and – crucially – more action taken based on this knowledge, more children and their families can be protected. Better outcomes for children can be achieved before, during, and after mobility, including the mitigation of risks surrounding secondary displacement. Evidence-based policies and programming on children and climate mobility can support countries to deliver on national and international commitments related to both child protection and climate change.

These positive outcomes, however, can only occur through data if data itself is fit for purpose: inclusive of children and their particular characteristics, ranging from gender to migration status. To effectively support children experiencing climate mobility, they first must become more visible to the decision-makers and practitioners seeking to assist them. Data has the power to inform, and in the best of circumstances, to influence. This workshop and the conversations held within it reaffirmed the importance of it being used to support children now and in future situations we both can and cannot foresee.

Annex 1. Workshop Concept Note and Agenda

Concept Note

Workshop on Climate-Related Child Mobility Data

Geneva, UNICEF Office, ILO Building, 4 Route des Morillons,

Geneva November 28 and 29

Summary

The International Data Alliance for Children on the Move (IDAC), in partnership with UNICEF Innocenti – Global Office of Research and Foresight (Innocenti) and UNICEF Division of Data, Analytics, Planning and Monitoring (DAPM), are seeking to facilitate a global collaboration around the theme of improving data on climate-related child and family mobility.

The workshop will convene a core group of cross-sectoral data and thematic experts working on issues relevant to mobility, climate, and child rights, protection and well-being. The objectives of the workshop will be to take stock of, and improve, data for informing solutions to the needs of children and their families engaged in contexts of climate-related migration and displacement, in order to set a shared research agenda, identifying common gaps, priorities, and opportunities for knowledge-sharing and collaboration.

Context

Millions of children around the world are engaged in both voluntary and forced migration and displacement as a consequence of slow-onset and sudden-onset disasters both of which can be exacerbated by climate change.[1] But to date, children engaged in climate-mobility have been statistically largely invisible. Data on populations displaced in sudden-onset disasters – such as floods, storms, severe droughts, and wildfires – are rarely disaggregated by age. Migration caused by slow-onset disasters such as extended and repeated droughts which create crises through economic and social impacts is difficult to quantify in the first place due to its overlap with other forms of migration. In contexts where extreme weather events collide with rapid urbanization, fragility and conflict, children engaged in migration are even more likely to slip through the cracks unnoticed. Discrepancies in the terminologies and methodologies used to define and collect data on climate mobility further complicate the utility and comparability of the data across contexts.

In addition to limited foundational data on the scale of climate-related migration and displacement, children impacted by climate mobility remain largely invisible in sector-specific data and evidence related to climate change, migration and displacement. For instance, data regularly collected on food insecurity and internal displacement are rarely disaggregated by age, despite the heightened risk that children face to malnutrition.[2] While close to half the world's refugee children are out of school, data

is not regularly collected on the number of children out of school in the context of displacement due to disasters.[3] A comprehensive review of the literature reveals similar gaps in child-specific data and evidence in the contexts of climate mobility and health, poverty, child protection, and WASH.

Similarly, while smaller-scale studies and evidence from other displacement contexts show that marginalized groups, including girls, conflict-displaced children, children living in indigenous and pastoralist communities and children with disabilities face heightened risks in the context of climate-related migration and displacement, data on these children in the context of climate mobility are rarely collected.

Global and regional gaps in available climate-related migration and displacement data, as well as poor data coordination, hamper efforts to identify children most at risk, prepare for and respond effectively, including by strengthening the services that build children's resilience to migration and displacement.

Objectives

In response to this pressing issue, IDAC and UNICEF will convene a core group of knowledge partners with the objectives of:

i. Landscaping available large-scale data on trends and patterns in climate-related child mobility, and relevant resources and platforms;
ii. Collaboratively mapping data gaps, data needs and priorities and developing a shared research agenda;
iii. Knowledge-sharing of relevant data products and data-driven research;
iv. Identifying good practices that can be replicated in other contexts;
v. Identifying areas for potential collaboration and partnership between institutions on joint data agendas related to climate-related child mobility;
vi. Engaging in additional agenda items that participants would find constructive to include.

The event is envisioned to be **in-person, over 1.5 days,** and **highly participatory.**

Participants will include migration and displacement focal points from IDAC members, relevant UN agencies, associated academic and research partners, thought leaders working at the intersection of migration and displacement and children, and representatives of the youth and children.

About the Organizers

IDAC is a cross-sectoral global coalition comprised of governments (including experts from national statistical offices and migration-relevant line ministries), international and regional organizations, NGOs, think tanks, academics, and civil society. The main objective of IDAC is to improve statistics and data on migrant and forcibly displaced children with the goal of supporting evidence-based policymaking that protects and empowers them.

UNICEF Innocenti – Office of Global Research and Foresight has as its core mandate the generation of cutting-edge, policy-relevant research that equips the organization and the wider global

community to deliver results for children and their families. Innocenti's current portfolio of work on child and family migration and displacement focuses on the generation, communication, and uptake of evidence across a

wide range of migration and forced displacement topics, including climate-related migration and displacement, inclusion and service access, the role that age and gender plays in refugees' and migrants' journeys, and rethinking migration from children's perspective.

UNICEF DAPM is responsible for driving, shaping and guiding UNICEF's evidence-informed analysis, strategic planning, monitoring and reporting. DAPM is leading the data and evidence work in various areas including migration, displacement and climate. Its recent work involves identifying hotspots of weather- related displacement of children. DAPM also leads the IDAC from UNICEF side.

Endnotes

[1] UNICEF Report: Children Displaced in a Changing Climate: Preparing for a Future Already Underway | UNICEF USA
[2] GRID 2023
[3] https://www.unhcr.org/media/unhcr-education-report-2022-all-inclusive-campaign-refugee-education

Agenda

Workshop on Climate-Related Child Mobility Data

Danube Room, UNICEF Offices
9th floor, ILO Building, Geneva

November 28-29, 2023

Day 1, Tuesday

8.30-9.00	**Registration**
9.00 – 9.10	**Welcome to the workshop** Danzhen You – IDAC and Ramya Subrahmanian – UNICEF Innocenti
9.10 - 9.40	**Participants' introductions and expectations from the workshop**
9.40 – 11.20	**Session 1 – Data Landscaping and mapping of data gaps and needs**

Landscaping data resources on trends and patterns, as well as data gaps and needs in climate-related child mobility

Moderator: David Leblang, University of Virginia.

Discussion starters:

- Andrew Wells – UNHCR
- Andrea Milan – IOM
- Christelle Cazabat – IDMC
- Sebastian Palmas – UNICEF-DAPM

- *Presentation of existing data resources*
- *Discussion of data gaps and needs*
- *Insights on challenges and opportunities*
- *Open discussion*

Guiding questions:

- How has the landscape of data on climate mobility evolved in the past decade? What notable advancements have been made? What challenges remain?
- What does existing data and research tell us about child-specific trends and experiences of climate mobility and immobility?
- To what extent have children been incorporated into existing data collection and research related to climate mobility?
- What are the most notable and pressing data and evidence gaps? What are the limitations of data that does exist on children and climate mobility?

11.20 – 11.40 **Break**

11.40 – 13.00 **Session 2 – Data Systems and Engagement with Data Users**

Discussion on the complex challenge of developing/enhancing national data systems and engaging with data users (including policy and program decision makers) to track and monitor the protection and development needs of children on the move, who are directly or indirectly affected by climate change.

Moderator: Estrella Lajom – IDAC

Discussion starters:

- Oscar Rico Valencia - JIPS
- Rifat Hossain – WHO
- Wolfgang Stojetz – ISDC
- Manuel Garcia-Herranz - UNICEF Frontier Data

- *Understanding national data ecosystems*
- *Pinpointing gaps and opportunities in data collection, analysis and use*

- *Open discussion*

Guiding questions:

- To what extent do national data systems currently track and monitor the protection needs of children on the move for climate-related reasons?
- What are the specific challenges – political, technical, systemic/structural and others – that countries and their national statistical systems face when it comes to collecting data on climate mobility? What are some possible concrete strategies to address these challenges?
- What can we learn after three years of the endorsement of the international recommendations on IDP statistics vis-à-vis the preparedness of national statistical systems to address human mobility in context of forced displacement?
- How can global frameworks be applied to mainstream durable solutions analysis to forced displacement into national statistics within the humanitarian-development-peace nexus?
- What are examples of country-led good practices in enhancing capacity to collect data on children and climate mobility?

13.00 – 14.00 **Lunch break**

14.00 – 15.30 **Session 3 – Knowledge-Sharing**

Knowledge-sharing of relevant data products and data-driven research at the nexus of climate change and human mobility.

Moderator: Anisa Metalla, UNICEF Innocenti

Discussion starters:

- Laura Linda Healy - UNICEF Program Group
- Ingmar Weber – University of Saarland
- William Low- Save the Children

- Existing and emerging data and methodologies, including innovative approaches

- Child-sensitivity (or lack of) of existing knowledge and data

- Open discussion

Guiding questions:

- Briefly describe the research/ work you have undertaken related to children and climate mobility. What methodological approach did you use to carry out this research? Can this approach be applied to other contexts?
- What lessons have you learned from conducting research in this area?
- To what extent does innovative work related to climate mobility consider a child-specific lens? What are the challenges and opportunities to doing so?

15.30 – 15.45 **Break**

15.45 – 17.00 **Session 4 – Partnerships**

Moderator: Robert Oakes – United Nations University

Discussion starters:

- Timo Schmidt - Platform on Disaster Displacement - UNOPS
- Hector Poveda – MYCP
- Barrozo Hirata, Janaina Hatsue - UNESCO
- Sarah Rosengaertner - GCCM

- *Signposting relevant networks, platforms and partnerships working at the intersection of climate change and human mobility*
- *Discussion on joint data agendas related to climate-driven child mobility*

Guiding questions:

- Briefly describe the initiative, platform or partnerships related to climate mobility that you are involved in. What is the main focus and structure of the partnership or initiative?
- What other platforms, processes or partnerships related to migration, displacement and climate change are most relevant to children on the move?
- What are the challenges you've encountered working on partnerships related to climate mobility? What lessons have you learned?
- How can various data actors, governments, academics, CSOs and international organizations better coordinate their efforts in the climate mobility space?

Day 2 (Wednesday)

9.00 – 9.30 **Recap and Reflections from Day 1**

Facilitated by Estrella Lajom – IDAC and Ramya Subrahmanian – UNICEF Innocenti

Discussion starters:

- Evan Easton Calabria – UNICEF Innocenti
- Stephanie Acker Houseman – UNICEF Innocenti

09.30 - 11.00 **Session 5 - Using Data for Action and Impact**
Part I - Research and Policy Implications

Moderator: Christelle Cazabat, IDMC

Discussion starters:

- David Leblang - University of Virginia
- Andrew Wells – UNHCR
- Rose Allen – UNICEF-DAPM

- Evan Easton Calabria - Tufts University; UNICEF Innocenti

- Discussion on the policy implications of climate-driven child mobility data
- Examination of the linkages between research findings and policy formulation
- Strategies for integrating data into policy frameworks
- Open discussion

Guiding questions:

- Briefly describe the research or data work you have undertaken related to climate mobility. What are the potential policy or programmatic implications of this work?
- How can the data and research community improve the communication, visibility and sharing of existing data and evidence on climate mobility? What are the current challenges related to communication and visibility?
- How can existing data and research initiatives be more strategically tailored to translate data and research findings into policy action for children?
- How can the importance of data – and investments in data – be integrated into policy frameworks?

11.00 - 12.00 **Session 5 - Using Data for Action and Impact**

Part II - Prospects for Joint Action and Advocacy

Moderator: Ramya Subrahmanian – UNICEF Innocenti

Discussion starters:

- Mariam Traore Hazalnoel – IOM
- Stephanie Acker -European University Institute
- Jane Linekar – Mixed Migration Center
- Sylvia Garry– WHO

- Identification of opportunities for further work and collaboration
- How to leverage IDAC to foster joint action and advocacy
- Open discussion

Guiding questions:

- How can we collectively and strategically leverage existing global processes and data collection efforts underway to ensure children are included in initiatives related to climate mobility?
- What concrete opportunities do you see for collaboration and joint action based on discussions and reflections during this workshop?
- How can we leverage the global platform of IDAC to advance joint action and advocacy for children on the move impacted by climate mobility?

12.00 - 12.30 **Final Reflections**

Interactive discussion on collaboration opportunities identified during the workshop

Facilitated by Ramya Subrahmanian – UNICEF Innocenti and Danzhen You – IDAC / UNICEF-DAPM

Guiding questions:

- What is one thing you learned or reflection that stuck out to you during this workshop?
- What concrete opportunities do you see for collaboration and joint action based on discussions and reflections during this workshop?
- Reflecting on the workshop discussions, what are 1-2 concrete action points would you prioritize in a joint agenda on children, data and climate mobility? Where are investments most needed?
- Moving forward, what key actors need to be brought into this discussion to advance this agenda?

12.30 – 14.30 **Farewell Lunch** (ILO Restaurant)

Contact information

To learn more about this event and for any additional questions, please contact Anisa Metalla (ametalla@unicef.org) and Estrella Lajom (elajom@unicef.org) with Josiah Kaplan (jkaplan@unicef.org) and Satoshi Watarai (swatarai@unicef.org) in copy.

Annex 2. Participating agencies

CIESIN, Columbia University
European University Institute (EUI)
IDAC / UNICEF-DAPM
Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC)
International Security and Development Center (ISDC)
International Organization for Migration (IOM)

Joint IDP Profiling Service (JIPC)
Migration Youth and Children Platform Committee on Data (MYCP)
Mixed Migration Center (MMC)
Platform on Disaster Displacement - UNOPS
Save the Children
UNESCO
UNHCR
UNICEF
UNICEF - Program Group
UNICEF – DAPM
UNICEF – Innocenti
UNICEF – LACRO
United Nations University
University of Saarland in Germany
University of Virginia
WHO